By the King.

A Proclamation concerning the execution of the Lawes against Recusants.

WHereas vpon the humble Aduice of Our Lords and Commons in Parliament, Wee resolued to put the Lawes in execution against Iesuites, Priests, and Popish Recusants, and by their iust forfeitures accruing vnto vs, to encrease Our Reuenue towards the defraying of those extraordinary Charges for the publique Defence of Our State, which necessarily doe lie vpon Vs, which Our determination Wee haue already published vnder Our great Seale of England, and caused the same to bee enrolled of Record in Our great Courts of Iustice: And that Resolution then taken by Vs, Wee haue since pursued in such measure, as for the present Wee could, and intend constantly to proceede therein with as much care and speede, as by the industry of Our Officers and ministers of Iustice the same can be effected, Which being a worke of time, cannot at once be begun and perfected: Yet because we found diuers of Our Subiects, being Recusants, apt to complaine, that the Lawes made and in force against them, if they should all bee strictly exacted, are so hard and seuere in diuers points, that the seuerall penalties and punishments which they must incurre, and vndergoe, would vtterly disable them and their families in their very subsistence, Whereby many of them must become a burthen to the place where they liue, and yet Our Profite would be nothing encreased thereby:

Wee tooke their humble Petitions in this behalfe into Our serious and Princely consideration, being desirous in all things to cary Our Selfe towards all Our Subiects with that Iustice and moderation, as is fit for a iust and a good King. For Our better instructions herein, by Our Commission vnder Our great Seale, Wee directed diuers of Our Lords, and others of Our Priuie Counsell, to take these things into their due consideration, and to aduise and informe Vs in what things wee might giue conuenient ease to the Recusants, without slacking the due prosecution of Our Lawes against them, or encouraging them thereby to persist in their errors, and without the destroying that part of Our Reuenue, which might fitly bee raised by their forfeitures, from which Our Commissioners, Wee haue receiued such aduice, as that thereout Wee haue drawen Instructions and Directions vnto Our Commissioners imployed by Vs, which Wee haue recommended vnto them vnder Our Royal Hand, and which We purpose shall in the substance thereof bee obserued by them in the ordering of that Seruice.

Now, leſt this Our Clemency and Moderation might bee miſconſtrued, and the one part of Our Subiects obnoxious to Our Lawes in this caſe might flatter themſelues, as if We could by any importunity be drawne to ſilence Our Lawes againſt them, and the other part of Our Subiects Conformeable to Our Lawes, and the true and orthodoxe Religion profeſſed by the Church of England, might be poſſeſſed with ſome diffidence, leſt Our Zeale and Conſtancy in Our Religion were cooled or abated, Wee haue thought fit hereby to make this publike Declaration, whereby all ſorts of Our Subiects may diſcerne, and be aſſured of Our cleere intention herein, and that Our full reſolution is not to decline from Our firſt purpoſe and promiſe for the due execution of Our Lawes in this caſe, nor will not at any time hereafter bee mooued, by any whoſoeuer, to that purpoſe; and yet that We ſhall proceede therein With ſuch moderation, as the whole World ſhall beare Witneſſe With Us, that Wee ſeeke their conuerſion, and not their ruine.

And whereas amongſt other things, which Wee haue directed in the fauour of the Recuſants, that We are contented, that they themſelues, or their friends for them, may take leaſes of Our two parts of their Lands, Which by the ſtrictnes of the Lawes is denied vnto them, ſo as alwayes they render vnto Us for the ſame as great a Rent, at the leaſt, as any other Would giue; Leſt this alſo ſhould receiue a miſinterpretation, and turne to the preiudice of Our ſeruice, Wee doe hereby publiſh and declare Our Will and pleaſure to be, that all ſuch Leaſes of Recuſants lands, as haue beene already contracted for, and for any defect in the proceedings, or otherWiſe are not yet paſſed, or not effectually paſſed vnder Our Seales, ſhall be proceeded in according to thoſe contracts; and for all other lands yet to be contracted for, that the Recuſants themſelues, or ſome for them, Within three moneths after the date hereof, ſhall make their Compoſitions With Our Commiſſioners for their owne Lands, or elſe it ſhall be free for any other to take the ſame; and that then, and in the meane time alſo, if any others ſhall make a better offer vnto vs for Our profit according to Our ſaid Inſtructions, then the Recuſant, or ſome other in his behalfe ſhall doe, that he ſhall be receiued. Of all Which Wee Will, that all Our louing Subiects, Whom it may any Wiſe concerne, doe take notice.

Giuen at Our Court at White-Hall the ſixteenth day of February, in the ſecond yeere of Our Reigne of Great Britaine, France and Ireland.

God ſaue the King.

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